



Blissfield DDA/Main Street
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“Placemaking is about turning a neighborhood, town or a city from a place you can’t wait to get through into one you never want to leave.”

All the Michigan Main Street communities support placemaking, and the Michigan Main Street Center requires professional managers. I’d like to show the impact DDA districts and TIFs achieve with a guiding hand from a DDA Director and/or Main Street Manager.

Since 2003, the total public and private dollars invested into Michigan Main Street downtowns is nearly \$200 million. These investments range from new mini-parks in Saline and Owosso, to complete façade and streetscape programs. Tax increment funding has allowed for big public-private partnership investment projects include the Niles “big brown take down” when metal slipcovers masking the original early 20th century brick facades were removed, and the restoration of the Howell Opera House.

With professional managers helping direct community volunteers, there are also events like the annual Asparagus festival in Hart, celebrating the community of Wayland, the Festival of the Sun and Moon in Oldtown, and Yuletide Cheer in Blissfield. These events are run by local volunteers, with sponsorships by corporations and local businesses giving back to their communities.

For every \$1 Main Street districts invest, private property owners have invested \$67 dollars, but that doesn’t tell the whole story.

DDA directors and Main Street managers make our Michigan downtowns places where people want to live, play stay. It’s not just one component, but many important collaborations that are invested in the success of communities.

Since 2003, Michigan Main Street districts have seen more than 1,300 net new jobs. Because of structural changes in the economy, Michigan has been particularly hurt over the last six years on the job front. But Michigan Main Street districts have succeeded against the trend. In four of the last ten years the number of jobs in the state of Michigan has declined. But every year since the beginning of Michigan Main Street there has been net job growth in Main Street districts.

Involved citizens make for vibrant communities, and vibrant communities are places where you want to live work and play.

Because Michigan Main Streets are grass roots efforts, the program and our communities rely on constituent involvement, all guided with a professional hand.

We are filled with passionate citizens for Main Street districts in Michigan communities. It's not unusual for an average MMS community to have over 400 volunteer hours in a month. At the national average of \$20.63, that's just over \$8,000. In Michigan, Main Street towns report collectively 385,243 hours. Residents' personal investment of time and talents provided nearly \$8 million in value to their communities.

Without the dedicated funding that TIFs provide to downtowns, there would not be the professional management to continue to leverage a small amount of public dollars with private dollars to make a huge impact in our communities. All shopping malls have professional managers, and our downtowns need professional managers as well.

Reasonable reforms are welcome, as it's been several decades since Public Act 197 was passed. Requests for reports and transparency will help make the case for supporting downtowns, as the recent MSHDA study of Michigan Main Street communities shows. Continuing to allow communities to establish and maintain TIF districts is vitally important to our economy, workforce development and placemaking.

“Main Streets flourish because they provide a variety of goods and services, a pleasant community environment and efficiency for those who frequent them. When people do their shopping at a main street, they simply accomplish more with less travel, and find the experience more entertaining.”

Sincerely,



Patricia Rayl
DDA Director/Main Street Manager
Blissfield, Michigan